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Dr. Sayed Ali Shygan

Iranian in exile blasts 'dictator'

A former member of the government now in exile told Iranian students here last night their nation's Shah was a "despicable dictator" and that someday "we will have a republic."

The speaker was Dr. Sayed Ali Shygan, once a member of Iran's Parliament who served a jail term there from 1953 to 1956 before coming to the U.S.

He addressed a large crowd of Cal Poly Iranian students, other students, faculty members and townspeople at a Persian New Year celebration at the Elks Club Monday night.

Dr. Shygan said he was a friend and close associate of Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq, Iranian premier ousted in 1953 by the Shah of Iran after Parliament had voted nationalization of oil.

Rumors that Mossadeq was allied with the Communists and that international oil interests had no hand in his ouster are a "fairy tale," Dr. Shygan charged.

He said Iran has struggled for freedom "and yet it is enslaved."

He charged that the United States Central Intelligence Agency had engineered Mossadeq's ouster. Mossadeq, along with Shygan, served a jail sentence, and Shygan said he is still under virtual "house arrest" in Iran.

In 1953, Mossadeq's supporters staged a brief uprising, and the Shah was compelled to leave the country. The royalist faction recovered control and the Shah returned. Shygan charged he was "a tyrant brought back from exile."

This action was a "calamity" for the people of Iran, Dr. Shygan said. They lost their "hard gained constitutional rights" and have "no free press, no free speech, no right to their property."

Dr. Shygan asserted that the Shah is not the benevolent leader he is made out to be. He said the Shah's father was a simple soldier who became a strongman, but was once so poor that his great hope was for "good soup."

"One of the wealthiest men on earth, by some miracle, is his son."

Shygan ended his speech by saying "no one can say what will happen next." He received a standing ovation from many of the Iranian students.

Dr. Shygan is now professor of Persian literature at the New School for Social Research in New York. He is a former Iranian Minister of Education, and once taught international law at Tehran University. He has written several books.

The Persian New Year celebration included Persian shish kabob, dancing and entertainment.